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Arthur K. Wu
Staff Director
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Room 337 A
Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Wu:

With reference to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations' hearing on "Terror on the Home Front: Are We Medically Prepared", that was held on November 14, 2001, I would like to answer the questions posed by Mr. Steve Buyer's letter dated January 10, 2002.

In my testimony I made several recommendations, including the need to institute a requirement for some type of training in bioterrorism for health care providers other than physicians. In my opinion, this educational training should be different from the one offered to physicians in terms of its complexity.

Specifically, I would like to recommend three levels of training:

1. Nurses and Physician Assistants.
2. Medical support personnel: Paramedics, ambulance, preventive medicine and laboratory technicians.
3. Non-medical: Military and Police force, logistics coordinators, and ordinance technicians interested or involved in medical aspects of biowarfare agents.

Group 1 would receive a training similar to the one offered to doctors. In fact, most of the available courses in bioterrorism are aimed to both physicians and nursing staff without a distinction. Both, doctors and nurses would attend together and receive the same information. However, physicians would focus more in depth in learning medical, physiopathology, and treatment aspects to a more sophisticated level of knowledge to be expanded by medical bibliography provided during the training. Nurses and physician assistants would remain in a more practical level in the management issues of biowarfare casualties. Upon completion of their training, each individual should *have knowledge*, at its level of expertise, of:

- Types of biological agents and their characteristics
- Biological warfare agents posing the greatest near-term threat
- Delivery mechanisms for biological warfare agents
- Signs, symptoms, and time course of biological warfare agent exposure
- Pathogenesis of key agents (more addressed to physicians)
- Selection and administration of pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis and treatment (more addressed to physicians)
- Recommended decontamination procedures for exposed persons and medical environment
- Risks to medical, medical support and non-medical personnel
- Procedures for protecting one's self from agent exposure
- Secondary contamination control techniques

Group 2, medical support personnel: Paramedics in hospital and outpatient setting, ambulance drivers, preventive medicine technicians, other medical personnel including laboratory technicians. They would *acquire basic knowledge* in:

- Recognizing when a biological warfare agent attack has occurred
- Initiating appropriate patient treatment at their level of expertise

- Assisting in caring for biological warfare casualties in a clinic or hospital
- Assisting in hospital administration related to biological warfare casualties
- Performing sampling to determine if an area is contaminated by a biological warfare agent
- Decontaminating the medical environment
- Providing information to other personnel to reduce panic
- Agent types and how they work as weapons
- Threat description

Group 3, non-medical personnel: Commanders and Police force, logistics coordinators, ordinance technicians. They need *general information* on biological warfare agents and their potential use as weapons, methods for self-protection, and appropriate medical treatment. After their training they will be able to *understand*:

- Appropriate protective measures before and after a biological warfare attack
- Available detection systems and protective measures
- Risky behaviors
- Basic health measures to halt the spread of infectious diseases
- Methods of decontamination
- Aggressive medical treatments to use in the event of biological warfare attacks
- Types of biological warfare agents and their use as weapons
- Basic signs and symptoms of biological warfare agents in comparison to those associated with naturally occurring infection

I hope that these recommendations can assist on the Nation's preparedness for biological threats. I will be available for further questions if deemed necessary.

Sincerely,



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cc:

Steve Buyer, Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
U.S. House of Representatives
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